WORDS OF RECONCILIATION.

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WHAT SHALL BE DONE WITH REVISION?

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church is to meet again this month, to gather up the fruits of a year's discussion and labors over this question, and to decide what must be done about it in the future. The present aspect of the case is not a gratifying one, either to friends or foes. It is generally agreed that the changes proposed by the Committee will give satisfaction to neither side, and that this compromising attempt to allay agitation in the Church will result in failure. The *Presbyterian Journal* of April 7th republishes from the *Christian at Work* the opinions of a number of men who represent divergent sides in this movement. We give extracts from some of these:

John Henry Barrows, D. D., Chicago: "The Committee's report will not accomplish a satisfactory Revision. . . . It would be the highest prudence for this Church to lay aside Revision at present and forever. . . . I heartily favor letting the Confession alone, and the adoption of a very short, simple, and Scriptural creed for practical use in the Church."

John Chester, D. D., Washington, D. C.: "The report of the Committee on Revision seems to fail of satisfying either the conservative or progressive elements in the Pres-

byterian Church. . . . If the next General Assembly would determine to postpone indefinitely the subject of Revision, a feeling of relief would, we believe, go up from the heart of the Presbyterian Church."

Isaac W. Hathaway, D. D., Jersey City: "The motive which eventuated in this attempt to revise our creed was to get rid of certain objectionable statements of hard doctrines. The effort has been made to both eliminate and to retain, to reveal and to conceal, to hold and give up."

From James M. Ludlow, D. D., East Orange, N. J.: "The word-tinkering of the Committee does not mend the old document sufficiently to atone for the marring of it."

Charles L. Thompson, D. D., New York City: "The Committee was so constituted that it was evident from the first that they would be unable to agree upon a report which would be entirely satisfactory to the Church. . . . The new language of the Confession does not fit very well into the old language; and some confusion of thought, also, and some lack of harmony between the parts, is introduced by certain changes that have been made. We will have not fewer, but more points of theological disagreement in the Church by reason of this revision. . . . Personally, I would be very glad if the Church would say, 'We have gone far enough on this road to prove that it is at present impracticable, and we will stop right here, and turn our attention to something else.' . . . There are very many who would say: 'Let us adopt the Revision Committee's report as marking a decided gain in theological thought and expression; and then let us formulate a creed for practical use in the churches.' But there is a serious objection arising from the consideration that the adoption of the Committee's report will be saying to the world, 'This, after years of deliberation, is the Presbyterian Church's final word in theology. We have thought it all over, and here is the result; this is our full declaration of what we now believe.' There are very

many of us who would be unwilling to be committed to such a statement."

Henry Van Dyke, D. D., New York: "Three things are evident in regard to the final report which is now submitted to the Church. 1. It is not more, but less, complete than the first report. 2. It mars the phraseology of a venerable document without improving its doctrine. 3. It leaves the Confession confused and self-contradictory.

"What is to be gained by the adoption of such a report? It is open to all the objections of the opponents of Revision, without fulfilling the hopes of its friends. . . . The Church will save time, and strength, and temper by facing the fact that success along this line is not probable; by laying the experiment aside at the first opportunity; and by turning at once to the preparation of a short, simple, Scriptural creed for practical use."

Of these men Drs. Barrows and Ludlow are well known as in sympathy with whatever is truly progressive in theology. Dr. Van Dyke has been zealous in the endeavor to shield Dr. Briggs from prosecution, and represents the young and hopeful element in Presbyterianism, which urges the Church, even in matters of creed, to forget the things that are behind, and to press forward to those that are before. Dr. Thompson was the most prominent man in urging and giving shape to the incipient revision movement. Why are these men now so ready to abandon it, and why are they placing all their hope for any good issue in this movement in the formulation of a new creed?

The Editor of this magazine has something to say to his former Presbyterian brethren about this matter, and he begs them to give him a hearing.

With respect to his claim to be heard, he has to present the record of the best years of his life, devoted to ministry

in that Church, and the fact that, after a quarter century's service, he surrendered his office and emoluments in it, not that he might cease to serve it, but because he believed he could thereby serve it and the whole Church of Christ more truly, and in a direction in which it was necessary that some one should move. It was the Editor of this magazine who took the initial step in this movement toward revision; but the step he took was looked upon by his Presbytery as so radical and revolutionary that he was told that, if he intended to move any further in that line, he must withdraw from the Church. The overture which he sought to press upon its attention through the Presbytery of West Jersey struck right at the heart of this trouble, about which the Church has been fruitlessly skirmishing these past few years. It was offered in the spring of 1885, and read as follows:

In view of the indefinite and divergent opinions prevalent in the Church concerning great questions in Eschatology, and in further view of the immense importance which attaches to the testimony of the Church upon matters of such vital interest, in its bearing upon both the good conscience of her ministers and the faith of their hearers, this Presbytery would respectfully petition the General Assembly to appoint a suitable Committee, whose duty it shall be:

1. To consider whether the doctrine of our Confession concerning the final results of God's dealings with mankind, as set forth in Chapter XXXIII, Questions 29, 89, Larger Catechism, and elsewhere, is a complete and final expression of the teaching of Holy Scripture on this subject.

2. To propose any alterations or explanations in the statements of our Standards on the subject which may seem

to them advisable, and to report any such proposed changes to the succeeding General Assembly for its suitable action in the premises.

The sections of the Standards referred to are those which set forth that the resurrection of the wicked is solely for retributive ends, and that in body, as well as in soul, which is already in the torments of hell, they are to be punished "with most grievous and unspeakable torments, with the devil and his angels, without intermission in hell-fire forever."

My claim at that time was that whatever is defective in the theological system of the Confession arises out of this harsh and distorted view of the final outcome of God's dealings with mankind, and specially out of a fundamentally false conception of the place and meaning of resurrection in the divine plan. The fact that the redemption which is in Christ provides that all who died in Adam are to be made alive in Him, shows that no view of the gospel can be complete which leaves out this universalistic side. Indeed all the opposition the close Calvinism of the Confession has encountered from the beginning arises from the conviction that it gives no proper scope to the wider stretches of God's mercy, as these are opened up in His Word and in the depths of the Christian consciousness. The controversy of a generation ago between the advocates of a universal and a limited atonement was one of the earlier phases of the irrepressible conflict. Dr. Charles Hodge used to teach us in the Seminary that the logical end of the arguments urged in support of the doctrine of universal atonement was universalism. The recent acceptance of a doctrine of universal infant salva-

tion, and more recently of the possible salvation of devout heathen, shows that the inevitable drift of the Christian consciousness of the Church is toward the conviction that no theory of the gospel can be the true one which does not somehow see blessing in it for "all the families of the earth;" and as it is impossible to see how this promise can be made good if death draws an impassable line which God's mercy cannot overleap in its efforts to bless "all," the question has forced itself to the front, whether there is no message of hope in these "glad tidings of great joy" for the uncounted myriads of the human race who have died without the sight. Hence the Church is now wrestling with one and another phase of this vital question of a future probation.

I have been telling the Church for eight years that the true solution of this great problem can be found only in a right understanding of her fundamental doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. I desire once more to repeat that testimony. The lamentable failure of the Revision movement proves—not that the movement was not right and necessary—but that it never can succeed until it goes to the heart of the question. Any temporary tinkering and patching—even a new short creed—will only heal this hurt slightly. The issue will have to be met. "Have we not been shutting out from the gospel a whole range of universalistic truth which we are bound to proclaim?" The letter of one of the most intelligent and honored Presbyterian elders in this city—Mr. Francis B. Reeves—which we give on another page, shows how the intelligent and high-minded men of the Church are turning over these problems in their minds and demanding for them

some intelligent solution. The letter also shows how irresistibly the minds of such men turn to some universalistic conception of God's kingdom that shall leave us with a universe cleansed from sin and from the defiling presence of sinners either by their conversion or destruction. Mr. Reeves does not seem to have thought this problem out to a full solution, but it is plain that his study of the Bible and his Christian consciousness both show him that there is no rest either for him or for the Church, until the universalistic features of the gospel are avowed, and its "much more abounding" grace shall be accorded its legitimate victory.

The Presbyterian Church may therefore as well make up its mind first as last that it will have to meet this issue. I have never urged it to take up with universalism as an *ism* or as a sect, but have merely insisted that her Standards, instead of recognizing the grace of God in His provision to raise the dead, perverted that provision into an inconceivable disaster to the bulk of mankind who have hitherto lived, and that she was bound to broaden her conception of resurrection, so as to find some form of blessing in it for all. I have sought to show that in a right conception of this "hope toward God that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust" (Acts xxiv, 15) is found the reconciliation between these two sides of Scripture teaching, the retributive and the redemptive; that all that is true in universalism may here be held without its dangers, and all of orthodoxy that makes for righteousness and purity and self-denial, and that rebukes procrastination and indulgence in sin and puts its proper emphasis on this life with its opportunities,

may here be held, without the dark shadows it draws over the face of God. There is neither time nor space in this article to show how this doctrine of univeral blessing in resurrection adjusts itself to the true doctrine of election, of the atonement, of the Christ, and of His judgment of the quick and the dead, or how it accommodates itself to whatever Science has to teach of the origin and nature and destiny of man. But in its allied truths of an ineradicable image of God in man, which is his essential self, of an existent evil personality into which man develops because of sin, and whose end is destruction, of personal continuity of being as dependent on character, in its doctrine of the solidarity of the race which fell in Adam and is restored in Christ, and that the conquering members of the race become the channels of deliverance to those who have fallen by the way—the first-fruits of a later harvest—and that in this great organism of humanity the dead are not wholly sundered from the living, but that saints are still called to have fellowship in Christ's sufferings, and to be with Him "baptized for the dead," there is found the new illumination for the whole round of Christian truth for which the Church is anxiously waiting, and the new stimulus to Christian endeavor, for the lack of which her work still languishes both at home and abroad.

IS IT VERIFIABLE?

The Rev. Thomas Allin, a clergyman of the Church of England, author of the book *Universalism Asserted*, which we reviewed in the last November number, has

written in a kindly spirit, approving the main features of our teaching, and especially that in respect to the Solidarity of the Race. He objects, however, that our basis is not broad enough for the full doctrine of universalism, as he derives it from reason, from Scripture, and from the history of opinion in the early Church. The two points at which he would dissent from our views are: 1. The distinction which we have made between the essential and the existent man. He says, that thereby we "puzzle and repel inquirers," that the distinction is not necessary, and that it does not seem to him to be verifiable. 2. He belives reincarnation to be "wholly unverifiable, hardly intelligible, and needless." Resurrection seems to him "to lead away from, and not to the flesh and its belongings. It is a process spiritual and eternal; a life slowly (and painfully it may be to some) communicated by Him who is the Life."

With regard to the first point, we regard it as the very point at which the argument for universalism has failed in its endeavor to convince the Church. Mr. Allin's book is remarkable for its breadth of view. If anybody could persuade the Church to accept that theory, he is the one to succeed. But while he pleads with us for the broadest basis on which to rest its claims, he would reject the very feature which seems to us necessary to reconcile the thought of the Church to a type of universalism which is certainly true and scriptural. It will be remembered that our position has been that there is a basis upon which orthodoxy and universalism can come to an agreement in this matter; and it is upon this very basis of a distinction between the essential and the existent man. The one is indestructible

and must attain finally the acme of perfect manhood in Christ; the other is destructible and must perish from the way, so far as through the process of death and self-abnegation he does not yield himself unto God. We have stoutly contended for the principle that *personal* continuity of being goes with character, that "soul" as distinct from "spirit" pertains to personality, that the "loss of the soul" and the "loss of self" are not unmeaning terms. We believe that current universalism, in failing to show this distinction, has stripped the great evangelical motives of much of their power over the minds of men, and that this is the reason why the Church, in rejecting it, has been betrayed into rejecting the essential truths that underlie it and give it vitality. This accounts for the present widespread agnosticism in the Church respecting these mysteries of the future. The Church, and even the ministry, are at a loss to know what to believe about them. One Sunday morning you may hear from an orthodox pulpit a sermon which logically leads up to universal triumph, and which sends the hearers away with the conviction that the character of God and the work of redemption necessarily require it; the next Sunday they are bewildered by appeals which imply that they stand on the brink of an everlasting destruction and an eternal hell.

There must be some way of reconciling these two sides of Scripture teaching, and of giving to the Church a firm, harmonious, and consistent faith on this vital subject, in lieu of this present cloudy, incongruous mixture of vacillating opinions and confused hopes and fears. We believe that the doctrine we have proposed is the truest "word of reconciliation" that has yet been spoken on the sub-

ject. If anybody propounds a better solution we shall be only too glad to embrace it; for here, if anywhere, an immense responsibility attaches to him who attempts to guide the souls of men.

As to Mr. Allin's second point—reincarnation—which he regards as unverifiable and hardly intelligible (a strange indictment in view of the fact that a majority of the human race from the earliest times have believed it), we can only say that, if any one so regards it, we have no desire to urge it upon him. We have never proposed it as an essential point in our system. It is not at all vital to our doctrine of the redemptive nature of resurrection or to the solidarity of the race. It has seemed to us to be a probable *mode* of the resurrection of that large class of mankind who are unfit for the "resurrection of life." Mr. Allin says that resurrection seems to him to "lead away from and not to the flesh and its belongings." Very true of that form of resurrection which is the special hope of the gospel—the resurrection of life. But there is also a resurrection which is not of life, but "of judgment" (John. v, 29), and one which leads through the lake of fire (Rev. xx, 11–15). The ordinary explanations of the resurrection of the wicked are (1) that they are raised in incorruptible bodies which become subject to endless torment. (2) They are raised in mortal bodies in which, after suitable punishment, their existence is extinguished. (3) They are, after punishment in hades, or after sleep, raised in bodies which restore them to Adamic perfection and put under a fresh probation, or (4) Universalists of Mr. Allin's school would hold that their resurrection is a long and often painful process of restoration. Now, if

either of these theories are "verifiable" from either Scripture or reason we fail to see it. The first is confronted at once with the fatal objection that the issue of the recovery of mankind by Christ from the pit of death is an everlasting life in misery for the most of those recalled. The same objection lies against the second, as it provides no use for resurrection save to protract and intensify punishment. The third is based upon the view that the ransom of all mankind from the curse that fell upon the race in Adam requires that all be restored to his original perfection, but neither this nor the next supposition, the fourth, make suitable provision for the harvest law of resurrection which requires that "whatsoever a man soweth, that must he also reap," and that embodiment registers deeds done. "To every seed his own body:" and God's way of teaching men to cease from sin is through suffering and judgment in the flesh. (I Pet. iv, 1–6.) Reincarnation provides scope for this principle, while it also makes room for the benevolent features in the operation of this law. But if any one prefers to believe that the resurrection of this class takes place in some other sphere of the universe than that of this earth, and that it is to another kind of life than the earthly, and apart from the chain of human life as we see it unfolding on this planet, and that their hypothesis is more "intelligible" than the one we suggest, he is welcome to his opinion. For our own part we fail to see that any of these alternative hypotheses is more verifiable from Scripture or has so good a claim to be called scientific.

We are glad, however, to find Mr. Allin at one with us at a more essential point than this—the Solidarity of

the Race. This principle is a primary one in Scripture and is necessary to any proper conception of its redemptive scheme. From a proper understanding of it must come the light which the Church is anxiously waiting for in this dark realm of eschatology. The principle, in our view, binds together in unity of interest and destiny the living and the dead. It is because of its easy and natural accord with this principle that we became convinced there must be a forgotten truth in the old world-wide belief in reincarnation. But whether mistaken in this or not, we are sure that Scripture so binds together the successive generations of men in its retributions, its promises, and hopes, that some form of connection necessarily subsists between the living and the dead, by which the victors over the flesh in this life-conflict become the helpers of those who are seeking to rise into the spiritual plane, and by which those who have fallen in the struggle can find their only possible recovery through those of us who are now called to have fellowship in the sufferings and triumphs of the Christ by which He is taking away the sin of the world.

LETTER FROM MR. FRANCIS B. REEVES.

EDITOR WORDS OF RECONCILIATION.

DEAR SIR :—A late number of the *Presbyterian* contained the following :

"Charles Kingsley did not hold Professor Briggs' notions about progressive sanctification after death. In a very eloquent passage he said : 'Death is not death if it kills no part of us save that which hindered us from per-

fect life. Death is not death if it raises us in a moment from darkness into life, from weakness into strength, from sinfulness into holiness. Death is not death, if it brings us nearer to Christ, who is the fount of life. Death is not death, if it rids us of doubt and fear, of chance and change, of space and time, and all which space and time bring forth and then destroy. Death is not death; for Christ has conquered death for Himself, and those who trust in Him.' "

I have been puzzled by the above extract, because I failed to see the application of the prefatory remark—that Charles Kingsley did not hold Professor Briggs' notions about sanctification after death, to the quotation from Kingsley that followed. It seems clear that Mr. Kingsley is here speaking, not at all of sanctification after death—of those who may die without faith, but of the disembodiment of saved souls. His closing sentence makes this especially clear: "Death is not death; for Christ has conquered death for Himself, and for *those who trust in Him.*" Like the poet, Longfellow, he regards death as a mere transition, "in a moment, from darkness into life, from weakness into strength, from sinfulness into holiness." The earthly tabernacle is dissolved, but only that its tenant may be brought "nearer to Christ, who is the fount of life."

Is not the doctrine of the progressive sanctification of believers in the realm of most favorable conditions strictly in accord with the teaching of God's word? I have found nothing contrary thereto in my Bible, and I have heard it preached by such faithful Presbyterian ministers as Albert Barnes and Henry A. Boardman time and time again. My study of the Scriptures has convinced me of the truth of this doctrine, and has led me also to cherish a

confident hope that in the world to come the process of sanctification will be, both as to progression and wideness of application, as much beyond the current orthodox views as God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts and as God's ways are higher than our ways. Founding my faith upon "the scope of the whole" divine word, rather than upon any one or any few texts, I look for "a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." I do not look for an *eternity* anywhere within the dominions of our merciful Christ for any of His enemies, but an eternity that shall endure after the conversion or the destruction of all His enemies, among whom must be included the great arch-enemy of good and of God; for inasmuch as we know that "*the last* enemy that shall be destroyed is *death*," it is evident that He who has the power of death—that is the devil—shall have been destroyed previously.

Faithfully yours,

FRANCIS B. REEVES.

PHILADELPHIA, April 7th, 1892.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

The idea insisted upon so strongly by the Rev. John Miller in his commentary on Romans, that righteousness between man and God is not fundamentally a standing in law but in character, and that the term relates primarily not to rightness of *relation* but of *being*, seems to us important. The "legal theology," built up so compactly on the basis of this epistle fastens the attention too much upon what is external between man and God, and so too

often serves to conceal the deepest thought of Scripture in its setting forth of the way of man's departure from and recovery to Him.

To Mr. Miller's thought of rightness of being we would add another which embraces it, and goes still more deeply to the root of this relation. *Rhythm* of being between man and God is the final result of that perfect work of Christ for and in man, by which man is made at one with God, and "by whom we have received the reconciliation."

All life is an emanation from God; specially is it true of man's life that it is of, from, and in Him, "of whom, and for whom are all things." God's being pulses and vibrates through every fibre and motion of man's being, but man has power to live in ignorance of this, and so to alienate himself from the life of God, becoming an enemy in his mind by wicked works through the ignorance that is in him. All wickedness—so this epistle teaches—takes its rise in this ignorance of God, and this consequent sinful departure from His ways. For His ways of necessity become at once ways of discipline to those who depart from Him. The rhythm is broken between man and God.

Salvation is the restoration of this harmony. It is the recovery and the right adjustment of man's being in fellowship with God, so that His life may flow through him in peace and joy forever.

It is thus easy to see why salvation must always begin in the way of faith. Man—even "Abraham our father," could not be "justified," set right with God by works. Man, once out of true relation with the Source of all life and blessing, will only flounder around in the darkness

while seeking to find God that way. But in the first act of faith he gets back again to the true centre of his being in God, and is set right at the very seat of his disorder.

The right rhythm is established between the soul and God. This is why "faith is counted for righteousness." It is a fundamentally righteous act. It brings back into rhythm with God the life that is vibrating all out of tune with His. And it is in this way that the life and death of Christ declare to us the righteousness of God, and are so efficacious to establish us in that relation. Christ awakens man to faith in God, and so connects Himself with the life of man just at the point where its alienation begins, and there restores the broken harmony. "Therefore being justified—set right with God—in this way of faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, . . . through whom we have now received the atonement." The Christian life, thus begun in faith, is to go on in one round of restored harmony, glorying in tribulations also, until finally it ends in the perfect life of heaven in which God shall dwell in us and we in Him, and we shall become vessels through which He can pour the rhythmic fullness and melody of His life through all the ages to come.

What relation the death of Christ bears to this manifestation toward and in man of God's righteousness is a deep subject. We hope to take it up in the next number.

We have been able here merely to fasten attention on the thought that "the righteousness of God," to which we are to be conformed, expresses something deeper than a relation in law or even in character; it goes down to the foundations of our being in God, and speaks of a harmony

there—which even science suggests to be the final end in creation—and which establishes us forever in righteousness, because we are brought not only into eternal rightness but into *rhythm* of being with the Source of all life, and being, and blessedness. They that receive this gift of righteousness must *reign* in life.

And as all God's present discipline of us is toward this end, we can understand why we are told to "Rejoice in the Lord *always* and in *everything* give thanks; to be careful for nothing," and why this peace of God, which passeth all understanding, should be the effectual guard of our hearts and minds under all the ills of life. "The God of *peace* shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly."

GOD'S IMAGE IN MAN.

We are indebted to Mr. Henry Wood for a copy of his book, just published through Lee & Shepard, Boston, price $1. Three of the chapters of the book appeared in recent numbers of the *Arena*. Our readers will remember the extracts in our March number from the one on "The Solidarity of the Race.". They will gather from the specimen of the book there given that the writer is a profound thinker upon current religious problems. This book conducts us over the field of modern religious thought, as will be seen from the titles of some of the leading chapters: "The Nature of God," "Revelation Through Nature," "Through the Son," "Biblical Revelation," "The Universality of Law," "Man's Dual Nature," "Evolution as a Key."

The leading ideas of the book are that man, as made in God's image, is essentially and only a spiritual being, that what we call the material part of him does not pertain to his essential self, but is only a form and vehicle for its expression, that the mission of Jesus was to exemplify this eternal fact of man's relation to God and to awaken within men the consciousness of it, that under His leadership and by His inspiration the race is being evolved and uplifted on to its true plane of being—the divine, that God's true revelation of Himself to man is not from any region without, but from within, that this is the key to the true doctrine of inspiration, and that the problem of salvation is the liberation of man from bondage to the errors and the evils that have woven their network of delusions around him and developed him into a personality of evil which has usurped the place and prerogatives of his true and divine self, and which must be crucified and destroyed in order that the real man may know himself as of God, and live.

It will thus be seen that this book, although rationalistic from the point of view of the strict literalist and dogmatician, adheres closely to true gospel lines. Its chief omission, from our point of view, is that it does not discuss in a full and satisfactory way the relation of the death of Christ to man's salvation. But in most respects it is a worthy representative of that new Christianity which is superseding the old orthodoxism, and which is concerned to find a basis for its faith which no storms of critical contention can upheave or remove. The extract we gave from the chapter on "The Solidarity of the Race" showed how closely Mr. Wood's thinking in some directions was in ac-

cord with our own. We find that this is so at some other points, as will be seen by these extracts:

Does animalized individuality possess a surviving personal consciousness, or must the life-force—which in its essence cannot be destroyed—be turned back to make another trial in some other form or condition?

In the disintegration of the dogma of an arbitrary hell imposed from without, we must beware of minimizing the peril of one which is self-made, that will burn out the dross as unsparingly as it is separated in a refiner's crucible. So far as we identify the ego with the body and the "carnal mind," we shall be lost, and that by law immutable, and even beneficent (p. 207).

It is not the *life*, but the consciousness, that may not endure. That which is linked to an environment must share its destiny. The divine image is man's ideal self. In the degree to which his ego is wrought into this indestructible part of his economy his personality has an immortal basis. When he says "I" to what does he refer? If to his body, or to his external and sensuous mind, he is in danger of losing what, *to him*, is himself. The external and *that which adheres to it* is subject to disintegration. The ideal in man is immortal, and the ego must be bound to it—yea, *be* it—in order to share its divine permanence. As man links himself to God and Spirit, his ego takes on their eternal attributes. That life, if such there be, which is *essentially* base and external, when the form is dropped will gradually lose its unreal personality (p. 256).

As bearing upon another burning question of the day we give the following:

The Church standards were formulated in an age of great limitations as compared with the present, and remain fixed, while actual belief is constantly changing. . . . Should dead formulas which are not believed remain inscribed

upon its banner? Some say, "Let them stand, but give them new interpretation." But this would be a specious diplomatic stretching and straining of language unworthy even of a secular organization. . . . The Church cannot afford to be more careless and contradictory—not to say dishonest—than the world. The latter has a contempt for sophistry, and looks upon sincerity as one of the primary elements of religion, in which opinion it is quite correct. The examination of a candidate for ordination, in which a creed must be evaded, and, at the same time solemnly affirmed, is a humiliating spectacle. Religion is a growing, living force. As well thrust an active, vigorous animal into a cast-iron mold as to exactly define all truth in external formula. In either case life is extinguished.

But the perversion which retains abandoned statements because human and sectarian pride will not admit previous misapprehension, has a subtler degrading influence than is often recognized. It not only forfeits the confidence of the world, but darkens Christian character. Hypocrisy is more dangerous than scepticism. Christ never condemned honest doubt, but he did denounce Pharisaism. Sincerity is a gem of the first water, but shams are odious. If one, in the interest of policy, begins a course of plausible concealments and conformities toward a creed that he does not truly accept, his spiritual perception becomes blurred, and moral degradation sets in. The eye must be single, otherwise darkness follows. A gospel with mental reservations, yea, that is not obviously transparent to the most impartial convictions of truth, is without vitality . . . God's law, deeply written in man's constitution will never condemn him, if he honestly seeks truth for its own sake. Such an one has a guidance which will never lead him out of the way. That scepticism which is the product of sin or selfishness is not sincere scepticism; but there may be honest doubt about some things which have been called religion, but hardly concerning its vital principles. Whether one be classed as orthodox or heterodox,

whether his creed be simple or complex, above all things let him be true to himself, and loyal to his deepest convictions. Any salvation which has no foundation of sincerity and transparency is not salvation at all.

CHARITY.

We shall never be able to understand fully just what Christian charity is, much less to fully exercise it, until we recognize the principles by which the human race is bound together in one great fellowship in life and destiny. We judge and criticise our fellow-men on a basis of individualism—as if they alone were to be blamed for their faults of character and transgressions in conduct. Without denying individual responsibility, it yet remains true that each individual soul comes into life handicapped with a variety of defects and with the germs of a whole fruitage of evils of which other persons have sown the seeds in the past. They struggle against misfortunes and vicious tendencies inherited from those who preceded them in the chain of life, and carry burdens, some of which perhaps crushed out the lives of which theirs is the continuation. We have often shown that there is a benevolent as well as a retributive feature in this arrangement, and that it is part of that redemptive mystery by which the overcomers among these burden-bearers become partakers of Christ in His bearing away the sin of the world. And the love that is like His, that stoops to bear the iniquities and carry the sorrows of others, that forgives men their trespasses, that goes out to seek and to save the lost, that scorns not the publican and the harlot, but sees in every human

being something that may be won back to God; the love that is patient and unwearying, that thinketh no evil, that even lays down its life for the brethren, is one that refuses to charge upon men the whole weight of the evils that inflame and debase them, and which measures all the past that lies behind them and the future possibilities stored within them, and so knows that through all this painful and perilous pilgrimage there is a hidden child in God's image in search of the Father.

EVOLUTION AND IMMORTALITY.

"The aim of the system of evolution is held to be the annihilation of the individual. More and more as the drama of life develops, it is said to be revealed that man is but the fragment of a mighty whole. The nothingness of the individual is declared to be a truth that grows in prominence in proportion to the advance in scientific knowledge, and the duty of man is said to be to yield up his own petty life to the great life of the universe. This is the origin of that doctrine which in modern times has become increasingly popular—that the only future state which man ought to look for is the state called corporate immortality—the state in which the individual loses his individuality, and is submerged in the life of the whole. He himself as a personal being will not live, but his influence shall. He shall live in the hearts of those whom he has left behind, shall live in the lives he has inspired, in the memories he has endeared, in the imaginations he has kindled, in the thoughts he has stimulated. This, we are

told, is a far nobler view of immortality than the search for an individual future, a view which lifts the mind out of its own selfishness, and ushers it into the glorious liberty of the life that has ceased to regard itself. In reaching this belief we have reached the highest motive to philanthropy, the purest stimulus to duty, the loftiest incentive to benevolence, and the most imperishable source of personal blessedness.

"Now we admit that the doctrine of evolution has increasingly revealed the organic unity of the universe, has increasingly brought to view the fact that the individual man is only a fragment of the whole. We admit, moreover, that it is the duty of the individual man above all things to realize this fact, to lose sight of his own individuality in the recognition of that great corporate community of which he forms but a single member. We hold, further, that the inculcation of this duty has been the special glory of Christianity considered as a moral system, that it was the religion of Christ and not the philosophy of Auguste Comte which first said, 'He that loveth his life shall lose it.' In that aphorism Christianity itself declared that exclusive individual contemplation constituted a waste of being. Yet strange to say, it is just here that Christianity has vindicated the claims of the individual. Why does it hold that exclusive self-contemplation is a waste of being? Simply because it holds that exclusive self-contemplation is a weakening of the *individual*, that the love of life is the loss of life. Christianity, like Comtism, would teach men to contemplate the welfare of that universal body of which each is but a member, but it would teach them that lesson by a precisely opposite

method. Comtism would say that the doctrine of individual immortality must be sacrificed that a man may cease to live for himself; Christianity says, on the other hand, that it is only by ceasing to live for himself that a man can ever realize the strength of his own personality and the ground of his own immortal hope. And experience has amply verified this Christian doctrine. All life has proved, all consciousness has testified, that the individual only really begins to live when he lives in the race. It is in the recognition of the truth of our membership in a corporate body that each of us rises into a sense of personal dignity, into a perception of individual power. As long as the life feels itself to be a unit separated from other lives, it must inevitably feel itself to be personally weak and insignificant; its personal strength only comes when its enthusiasm comes, and its enthusiasm only comes when it is lifted out of itself. On this ground also, therefore, we hold that the doctrine of evolution has rendered service to the doctrine of immortality. In opening up to man a view of his individual fragmentariness, it has revealed to him the best method in which his fragmentariness can be redeemed. In teaching him to lose sight of himself, it has caused him to find himself; in awakening him to the interests of that mighty whole of which his life forms a part, it has given to that life itself a strength which it knew not before."—*Rev. G. Matheson, D. D.*

It was a maxim of Empedocles that "Like can only be known by like." Man can know God only because he has a nature kindred to God.

When St. Paul teaches that death is the last enemy that shall be conquered, evidently in this death he comprehends the second death, else there would still be an enemy to conquer.—*Martensen.*

Reincarnation seems to be a natural method of restoration for the unjust, and to bring with it just the kind of further judgment and discipline they need. For men must needs suffer in the flesh to cease from sin. This method is free from the assumptions of most restorationists, who ask us to believe that this class of the dead will be restored to Adamic perfection in some future age by some marvelous exercise of divine power foreign to the methods of God's working in the realms of life so far as we are able to explore them. This view also gives added dignity to the processes of life going on in the world around us, and brings God very close within the whole circle of human life and of human affairs.

The idea of reincarnation was much more familiar to the Jews than to us, and more accordant with their conceptions of the future. It was taught in the Cabbala. Traces of it appear in the New Testament, as, for instance, in the answer of the disciples to Jesus' question, "Whom do men say that I am?" They reply, "Some say Elijah, others Jeremiah, and others, one of the old prophets."

The Jews never derived from the Old Testament the definite ideas of a future life with which we are familiar. Individual hope for the future was largely bound up with hope for the nation. Their future was in someway to be

identified with those to come after them. Instead of the fathers were to be the children. The identity in life and destiny between successive generations which Scripture so constantly takes for granted and builds upon, together with the fact that the medium for the transmission of blessing from generation to generation is always a chosen "seed," furnishes the Scripture basis for this doctrine that the inferior order of resurrection is a re-birth into earthly life.

NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS.

DAVID GRIEVE.—Mrs. Humphrey Ward's new novel, reiterates the religious opinions brought out in *Robert Elsmere*, in which she sought to show that the Christianity of the future must be one freed from the dependence upon the "mythical," and even the historical elements which have hitherto been regarded as necessary to its existence. At the same time these opinions are put forth in a less offensive form, and one in which more tolerance and sympathy are shown to those who are not yet prepared to receive what she regards as essential truth, except it reach them through the channel of the traditions which they have been accustomed to respect.

The trouble with Mrs. Ward, and all that class of Neo-Critics which she represents, is that she has never risen to the true conception of what Christianity is, and what it proposes to do for the world. And she is not wholly to blame for this, for the Church itself has partly misconceived and misrepresented its mission. The tendency in modern Christianity to become *practical*, to expend its efforts in bringing to men and to society a present salvation from the burdens under which they suffer, shows that the church is coming partly around to the position of "David Grieve," that the first business of the saint is to be and to do good to his fellow-men here, and that in the effort to subdue self and to do good to others each man is to find within himself, rather

than in any external authority, the only infallible proof of God and immortality.

And yet all this leaves out of view the fact that the Christ was something more than the supreme example of unselfish sacrifice for the good of others. Christianity claims that the idea of man as the Son of God first finds its true and perfect expression in Him, that as such He holds a pre-eminent relation to the race as the Head of humanity in whom it was redeemed and lifted above the power of sin and death and made immortal. It holds that the race, first organized on the natural and earthly plane, is being reorganized in Him, and uplifted to the spiritual and eternal plane of being on which man, as the true son of God, shall enter upon the sphere of existence and dominion suited to his divine origin and nature. There is a whole line of truth here, below the surface of Scripture, relating to the solidarity of the race, the ties that bind man to his fellow and the living to the dead, of which Mrs. Ward seems wholly ignorant; which even the Church has largely overlooked, and which, when once perceived, puts altogether a different complexion upon the argument for the Scriptures as the Word of God, and for the confession that Jesus is the Christ of God. Mrs. Ward's Christianity can get along without any witness that God has raised His Son Jesus from the dead. An open-eyed Christianity beholds God in humanity raising the whole body of it above the reign of death, through the power that wrought first in Christ and raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in heaven.

Easter.—The annual celebration of Easter, with the fact that nearly all the Christian bodies who held out against it for a long time are vying with the older Churches in the expressions of their faith and joy on that day, is one of the most hopeful signs of the times. The whole Church is showing a larger appreciation of the great fact on which all hope for herself and mankind is based. The gloomy associations of despair with which that doctrine has been invested in its bearing upon the future of the countless myriads of the dead and living who have been

ignorant of God and of the gospel of His Son, are fast being dispelled, and the light of a larger "hope toward God" for all mankind is seen to legitimately arise from the fact that "As in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive; but every man in his own order."

When the Church comes to understand that there are but two orders of men spoken of in Scripture—the earthy and the heavenly—and to grasp the meaning of the limitation put upon the universalistic hope that "all shall be made alive," by the condition "every man in his own order," the way will be cleared for an eschatology that shall glorify God's boundless grace and at the same time throw around sinful men all those checks and motives which are needed to induce them to forsake sin and to fly for refuge to the hope set before them in the gospel.

Defeat of the Briggs Delegates.—It was a genuine surprise to hear that the New York Presbytery which, last fall, virtually exonorated Dr. Briggs by a large majority, has declined to elect delegates to the coming Assembly favorable to his side in the controversy, or to Union Seminary which sustains him. This shows a decided reactionary spirit among the members. They have not even allowed the Seminary to be represented by Dr. Francis Brown, whom the officers of that institution were relying upon to plead their cause. This seems to us, to say the least, very unfair. With Dr. Patton slowly convalescing from a protracted illness, and forbidden by his physician to go to Portland, and the magnates of the New York Presbytery who have been foremost for revision shut out from the discussion, it is difficult to forecast what the issue of this vaunted movement will be. Since many of its early advocates are repudiating it in its present form, we apprehend that Horace's old maxim, *Montes parturiunt*, etc., will be freely quoted against it.

For our own part we have no disappointments about it. As explained in the first article in this number, we saw from the first that the revision movement never touched bottom. We tried to start it in that way, and lost our eccleciastical life for

our pains. But we are quite sure that the hand of God is directing this whole matter, and that the Presbyterian Church will in the end have to face the question, whether her exclusion of all but the elect from any merciful design in God's provision to raise the dead is not a fundamental denial of the gospel with which she is put in trust.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.—The Rev. E. Petavel, D. D., has added to the obligation we were under to him for the French edition of his new work on *The Problem of Immortality* by sending us the English translation, made by Mr. Frederick Ash Freer, and published by Elliot Stock, 62 Paternoster Row, London. Many English readers will be made glad by this opportunity of access to Dr. Petavel's book. He is, in our judgment, the best and most broad-minded of extant writers on the conditionalist side of this question.

We have not space in this number to say what we desire to say in review of Dr. Petavel's discussion of this great problem. We shall hope to give it our attention in the next number.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

From a new subscriber:

I have read several copies of WORDS OF RECONCILIATION loaned to me by a friend. I am aware of your honorable course relative to the Presbyterian ministry. I find much in the magazine to approve and somewhat with which I am unable to agree. I believe that the human being is purely human, an organism akin to the beasts but more highly developed, a better, finer, more intricate machine, mortal purely, made wholly of material elements—water, lime, and ammonia—or, as Genesis generically puts it, "dust of the earth," and at death becoming utterly extinct, *non est*, practically, as though he had not been. As I read Genesis and Job (14th) and Jesus and Paul, trying only to extract the facts stated, irrespective of results, that description is their description. I do not believe that man is part man, part god or God, or that he is inherently or by nature possessed of any element not dissolved and terminated by the act of death. I do not know what portion of Scripture you may have to sustain the hypothesis of an Elohistic element in humanity, but I am unaware of any.

Perhaps you can enlighten me. I believe in a resurrection, or making alive again of all men who have died, and in two classes at least, one immortal by divine bestowment, the other human but capable of acquiring endless life. I believe Jesus bought the right to raise up humanity by the giving of His own life. The traditional and (miscalled) "orthodox" hell is a wicked speculation based on the immortal soul theory, and riveted by the death-ends-all-probation theory. I believe the word "soul" in most places in the Bible means person, especially living person or being, and not an ethereal entity, though it is possible to use the term as a conventional label for the summation of our faculties, as strength is the quality of muscle and mentality of brain. The quality perishes with the substance. Many people are troubled with the fear that unless some part of them survives the shock of dissolution as a nucleus for future growth, to say the least, they do not see how they will ever get alive again. Before the world was, every creature must have been pictured perfectly in the creative mind. That picture remains before, during, and after the brief span of life. Hence the Creator who uncreates can create again. "He giveth it a body as it pleaseth Him."

But I had no intention of making so long a confession of faith. I am glad that you emphasize the redemptive character of the resurrection. I wish you would send me WORDS OF RECONCILIATION for 1892.

We publish the above letter as illustrating how good men who are devout students of Scripture may easily mistake a part of the truth on this weighty subject for the whole.

We agree with our correspondent in his view that the soul is the person, and that it is not inherently immortal. But the spirit that animates the body and soul of a man, and that builds him up into a person, is immortal. Scripture affirms that the soul may be lost, or it may be saved, in which latter case the soul acquires immortality, or more strictly it receives from God the gift of eternal life. In this case the soul becomes penetrated and transformed by spirit, which is divine and imperishable. We find, then, in this constant teaching of Scripture that the soul may be lost or saved, proof, first, that it is destructible (Matt. x, 28), and second, that it is capable of eternal life. It could not be so capable, unless it had affinity for spirit, which is God. Hence there must be a spiritual, or, as our correspondent puts it, an Elohistic element in man.

The New Testament further teaches that this quickening of man by the Divine Spirit may take place in this life. Men may become here and now spiritual, so that they shall not, in the truest sense, see death (John viii, 51, 52). How our friend in the face of all this class of Scripture teaching can maintain that all men are so entirely mortal as to be wholly dissolved by death and non-existent until a distant resurrection, we cannot understand. The teaching referred to in Job xiv belongs to the twilight of revelation and applies only to the natural man as such, who, unless quickened by the Spirit, does go down to destruction until reconstructed by the power of God in resurrection.

But something even in his case must survive as a basis for resurrection. Our correspondent speaks of the continued existence of a picture or idea of the man in the creative mind. But an idea in the mind of God is a *reality* and the deepest reality. Everything that exists takes its origin as a thought or idea of God. It then and there takes form and spiritual substance. It is the real entity which afterwards is clothed in outward form and personal expression. It is after this idea or image of God that man was made. As a spiritual entity, therefore, man has eternal existence in God. And after the destruction of body and soul in which this image was imperfectly and unworthily expressed, this essential man continues to exist and must again seek personal expression. Hence there remains in even the unsaved man the germ and potency of resurrection. This change is not therefore a fresh creation, as this letter describes it, but a recovery and reinvestment.

There is no ground either in Scripture or reason or science for the hope of future existence for man, except in the fact that the highest and ultimate Being in the Universe—God—personalizes Himself in man. This implies that the root and ground of every man's being is in God, and that therefore he is germinally spirit, which, being divine, neither sins nor dies. But in the progress of man to perfect personality, he takes on imperfect forms of personal expression in body and soul. These must perish from the way until the goal of perfect manhood, which is the image of the invisible God, is reached.